



FIREWORKS SAFETY TIPS TO HELP YOUR FOURTH OF JULY SPARKLE



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Editor's Note: Local city ordinances may ban the use of fireworks, including sparklers. With the recent string of hot weather and abnormally dry conditions throughout much of Wisconsin, local governments may also have restrictions in place for fireworks use. Wisconsin residents should pay attention to their local media outlets for any announcements.

MADISON – From sea to shining sea, Americans will celebrate our nation's birthday next week with family gatherings, cookouts and fireworks. State officials are asking Wisconsin families to use great caution with fireworks during this year's celebrations, particularly in the presence of children.

"More than 40 percent of fireworks-related injuries involve children under the age of 15, with sparklers associated with a significant number of emergency room visits," said Sandy Chalmers, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. "The lighting of fireworks should be left to adults, and children should enjoy the lights and sounds from a safe distance."

In 2011, 15 Wisconsin residents were hospitalized and 83 visited emergency departments due to fireworks-related injuries, according to Dr. Henry Anderson, State Health Officer.

Wisconsin law regulates the use of fireworks. Fireworks such as roman candles, firecrackers, bottle rockets, mortars – anything that explodes or leaves the ground – can only be purchased and used with a permit issued by your local government.

Non-explosive devices such as sparklers and cones do not require a permit, but that does not mean they can be used safely by children. More than half of the nation's reported fireworks-related injuries are burns. "Many parents think of sparklers as a safe toy, but a lit sparkler burns at temperatures of up to 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit and can cause third-degree burns," Anderson said.

A recent and welcome trend for Fourth of July celebrations is for children to play with glow sticks, bracelets or necklaces rather than fireworks. They are safe, available in a wide range of colors and styles, and last up to 12 hours – keeping your kids occupied far longer than a potentially dangerous sparkler. Flashing LED lights are also a fun option for kids. As an added benefit, any of these items will help make a child visible to a driver if they are playing after nightfall.

If you plan to use fireworks, follow these safety tips to ensure a safe Fourth of July for your family:

- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Read and follow all warnings and instructions.
- A responsible adult should closely supervise all fireworks activities.

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- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, flammable materials and dry leaves and grass – especially given the current dry conditions throughout much of the state.
- Light one item at a time and then move back quickly.
- Never carry fireworks in a pocket or light them in or near metal or glass containers.
- Keep a bucket of water or a hose handy in case of a malfunction or fire.
- Most importantly – if fireworks fizzle and don't ignite, douse them with water and do not relight them!

For more information on fireworks safety, visit:

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/InjuryPrevention/Fireworks.htm>

For information on the legal use of fireworks, visit:

http://www.doj.state.wi.us/news/files/2011_fireworks_advisory.pdf

For consumer information, visit the Wisconsin Bureau of Consumer Protection's on the web at

<http://datcp.wisconsin.gov>; by e-mail at datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov; by phone at 1-800-422-7128; or on Facebook: [facebook.com/wiconsumer](https://www.facebook.com/wiconsumer).

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